Approved For Release 2000/08[redacted]19-8
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Front Page | Edit Page | Other Page

DES MOINES, IOWA
REGISTER

M-230,891
S-519,495

DEC 5 1966

NEVADA PILOT FLIES FOR CIA

By Nick Lamberto
(Register Staff Writer)

NEVADA, IA. — Though he now flies for one of the most secretive airlines in the world, David Allen, 29, of rural Nevada, remains "an Iowa farm boy at heart."

David's mother, Mrs. Phillip Allen, a Nevada school teacher, said her son "hopes to save his money and someday come back to Iowa and buy a farm."

Cattle-Raiser

"It takes a lot of money to buy a farm nowadays," she added. "David would like to raise cattle someday."

Allen is a pilot for Air America, called the private air force of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Air America, the world's shyest airline, flies unmarked aircraft, never advertises and never discusses its operations.

Pilots wear plain gray uniforms, do not mingle with other pilots and receive an [redacted] of $18,000 a year.

Allen joined Air America in April, 1965, after five years as a Navy pilot. He was graduated from Milford High School in 1955 and from Iowa State University in 1959.

Allen writes frequently to his parents but "tells us very little about his work," Mrs. Allen said.

Sleeping Bag

"For Christmas he wanted a sleeping bag and a mail order catalogue," said Mrs. Allen. "We sent him the sleeping bag but couldn't get a catalogue. He just loves to fly.

"We probably won't see him until next summer when he gets leave."

Mrs. Allen said a recent letter from her son told more about his work than any they have received. The letter described an assignment in which he ferried a light plane 6,000 miles from Switzerland to Thailand.

The plane was a Pilatus Porter, developed in Switzerland to retrieve stranded skiers from mountain slopes. It costs about $100,000, can take off loaded in 320 feet and can carry 11 persons. It climbs at a rate of 1,420 feet a minute and can land at a speed of about 47 knots.

At least 50 Air America fliers and 20 aircraft have been lost to enemy action. Many captured Air America fliers have been killed by the Viet Cong, who treat them as spies.

Brother in SAC

Allen is unmarried. A brother, Edward Allen, 26, is with the Strategic Air Command near Omaha, Neb. A sister, Jane, is married to a former Air Force pilot.

"David's the only one who really wants to come back and be a farmer," Mrs. Allen said.

Approved For Release 2000/08/03 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000100060019-8